

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GENEVA 02769 01 OF 02 141912Z
ACTION IO-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6572

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 2769

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: AORG, WHO
SUBJECT: 30TH WHO ASSEMBLY

SUMMARY: THE UPCOMING 30TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (WHA) WILL, IN MANY RESPECTS, BE A TURNING POINT FOR THE ORGANIZATION. THE CENTRAL DECISION TO BE MADE WILL HAVE TO DO WITH THE STRATEGY IT WILL FOLLOW OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS TO REVAMP ITS WORK SO AS TO DIRECT AT LEAST 60 PERCENT OF ITS BUDGET TO TECHNICAL COOPERATION (MAINLY, OF COURSE, IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES). IN THE LIGHT OF CONCERNS, SUCH AS THOSE EXPRESSED IN THE RIBICOFF REPORT, WE HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL STAKE IN SEEING THAT THESE RESOURCES ARE NOT ONLY USED WELL, BUT THAT THE AID COMPONENT OF WHO'S BUDGET DOES NOT LEAD TO DEMANDS BY THE RECIPIENTS OF THIS AID FOR UNNECESSARILY HIGHER ASSESSMENTS IN THE YEARS AHEAD. WE BELIEVE THAT THE RESTRUCTURING TAKING PLACE IN WHO MUST BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THESE CONCERNS AND THE PRESENT CABLE IS AN EFFORT TO BEGIN THIS PROCESS. SUBSEQUENT CABLES WILL (A) PRESENT A CHECK LIST OF SPECIFIC ITEMS ON THE 30TH ASSEMBLY AGENDA WHICH WE BELIEVE REQUIRE CLOSE ATTENTION, AND (B) EXAMINE OTHER ISSUES FROM A GENEVA PERSPECTIVE WITH WHICH WE BELIEVE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 GENEVA 02769 01 OF 02 141912Z

WASHINGTON WILL BE CONCERNED. END SUMMARY.

1. RESOLUTION 29/48, ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY IN MAY 1976, CAPS OFF A PROCESS WHICH BEGAN SOME YEARS AGO UNDER WHICH THE ORGANIZATION BEGAN A PROCESS OF REGIONALIZATION AND INCREASED DELIVERY OF DIRECT TECHNICAL SERVICES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THROUGH

REGIONAL OFFICES. THE NEW RESOLUTION OBLIGED THE ORGANIZATION TO HAVE AT LEAST 60 PERCENT OF THE ASSESSED BUDGET EXPENDED ON "TECHNICAL COOPERATION" BY 1980-81.

2. IN LINE WITH THIS AND OTHER OBJECTIVES, DIRECTOR GENERAL MAHLER HAS EVOLVED A "POLICY AND STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION" (EB DOCUMENT 59/6, ANNEX1) WHICH WAS REVIEWED BY THE NEW PROGRAM COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AT ITS FIRST SESSION IN NOVEMBER 1976, AND BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ITSELF IN JANUARY 1977, WHICH RECOMMENDED ITS ADOPTION BY THE ASSEMBLY (OFFICIAL RECORDS NO. 338). ONE EFFECT OF THIS STRATEGY WILL BE TO ABOLISH 313 PROFESSIONAL AND GENERAL SERVICES POSITIONS IN GENEVA AND TO REDIRECT THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES THUS MADE AVAILABLE TO TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES, PRIMARILY IN THE FIELD.

3. THIS MISSION BELIEVES THAT THE PROPOSED NEW "POLICY AND STRATEGY" HAS LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY AND PERHAPS FOR OUR ABILITY, IN THE LONG RUN, TO MUSTER FOR THE ORGANIZATION THE KIND OF POSITIVE SUPPORT THAT WE WOULD WISH.

4. IN MISSION'S VIEW, WE ARE ENTERING UPON A NEW ERA IN THE WAY WHO PROGRAMS WILL BE DEVELOPED AND HOW THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO WHO WILL BE EXPENDED. FOR THIS REASON, MISSION ATTACHES EXCEPTIONAL IMPORTANCE TO DOCUMENTS EB 59/6; OFFICIAL RECORDS NO. 238; AND WHA CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GENEVA 02769 01 OF 02 141912Z

RESOLUTIONS 28.75, 28.76 AND 29.48, AND URGES THAT WASHINGTON GIVE ESPECIALLY CLOSE SCRUTINY TO THEM.

5. THE PRINCIPAL UNRESOLVED QUESTION WE FEEL WE SHOULD FOCUS ON IS THE DEFINITION OF "TECHNICAL COOPERATION." THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE LEAVES IT AS A QUESTION FOR THE FUTURE (EB 59/6, PAGE 7). THE EXECUTIVE BOARD DECIDED FOR THE PRESENT UPON A PRAGMATIC APPROACH, AND AGREED THAT THE CONCEPT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL IS EVOLVING, "DESERVING FURTHER STUDY" (OFFICIAL RECORDS 238, PAGE 118). IN THE VIEW OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL QUOTE TECHNICAL COOPERATION MEANS ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE A HIGH DEGREE OF SOCIAL RELEVANCE FOR MEMBER STATES IN THE SENSE THAT THEY ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS DEFINED NATIONAL HEALTH GOALS AND THAT THEY WILL CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY AND SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HEALTH STATUS OF THEIR POPULATIONS THROUGH METHODS THAT THEY CAN APPLY NOW AND AT A COST THEY CAN AFFORD NOW, AND WHICH CONFORM TO THE PRINCIPLE AND AIM OF DEVELOPING NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE IN MATTERS

OF HEALTH END QUOTE. WHAT SEEMS TO BE EVOLVING, ACTUALLY, ARE CONCEPTS BASED ON REGIONALLY DEFINED CONCERNS SUCH AS THOSE TO BE FOUND IN RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS ADOPTED BY WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND QUOTED IN ANNEX III TO EB 59/6. THESE MAY NOT BE OBJECTIONABLE, BUT THEY DO NEED TO BE STUDIED FOR THEIR IMPLICATIONS.

6. THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW STRATEGY EMERGE IN HARD, COSSSED-OUT TERMS IN THE WHO PROPOSALS FOR THE 1980-81 BUDGET ISSUED APRIL 7 (DOC 238). IT PRESENTS, AT APPENDIX 4, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S PROPOSED TARGET CEILINGS FOR EXPENDITURES IN EACH OF THE REGIONS DURING THE 1980-81 BIENNIUM.

7. SECRETARIAT SOURCES HAVE EXPLAINED TO US THAT, AS IN RECENT YEARS, THESE TARGET FIGURES WERE SET ABSTRACTLY AND QUITE ARBITRARILY, AND ARE NOT BUILT UP
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 GENEVA 02769 01 OF 02 141912Z

FROM ANALYZED PROGRAM BLOCKS. WHAT THEY REALLY REPRESENT, ARE SOME FINE POLITICAL JUDGEMENTS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL ABOUT (A) A TOTAL PRICE TAG LIKELY TO BE CURRENTLY SALABLE TO THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS (2 PERCENT REAL

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 02769 02 OF 02 141934Z
ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IOE-00 AF-10 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12
NEA-10 OIC-02 OES-06 AID-05 HEW-04 SS-15 SP-02
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GENEVA 2769

GROWTH), AND (B) A DIVISION OF EXPENDITURES BETWEEN REGIONS WHICH WILL SIT RIGHT POLITICALLY WITH THE THIRD

WORLD MAJORITY (THIS COMES OUT, FOR EXAMPLE, AS A LARGER THAN PROPORTIONATE SHARE FOR AFRICA).

8. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PROCESS ARE THAT THE SIZE OF WHO'S 1980-81 BUDGET MAY ALREADY BE SET IN CONCRETE, NOW THAT THE DIRECTOR GENERAL HAS LAID TARGET FIGURES ON THE TABLE. HAVING BEEN GIVEN REGIONAL TARGET CEILINGS, MEETINGS WILL BE SCHEDULED IN EACH OF THE THIRD WORLD REGIONS BETWEEN NOW AND NEXT SUMMER IN WHICH GOVERNMENTS OF EACH REGION WILL DECIDE, ON A REGIONAL BASIS, HOW TO SPEND THAT REGION'S TARGET ALLOCATION. OUT OF THESE MEETINGS WILL COME CONCRETE PROGRAM FORMATS, ALONG WITH EXPECTATIONS THAT THESE WILL BE FUNDED (WHEN THE 1980-81 BUDGET IS ADOPTED) AND IMPLEMENTED. THAT IS TO SAY, THE PROCESS HAS ITS OWN MOMENTUM, AND DEMONSTRATES HOW CRITICAL IT IS TO EXERCISE "POLITICAL" INFLUENCE ON THE KEY "POLITICIAN" IN THE PROCESS -- THE DIRECTOR GENERAL -- BEFORE HE ARRIVES AT HIS LARGELY "POLITICAL" JUDGMENTS ABOUT (A) WHAT FINANCIAL BURDEN THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS ARE PREPARED TO BEAR IN THE OVER-ALL SIZE OF THE PROSPECTIVE PROGRAMS, AND (B) HOW THE TOTAL CAN BE SHARED AMONG REGIONS IN A POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE WAY. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 GENEVA 02769 02 OF 02 141934Z

9. UNDER THE NEW STRATEGY, AN ATTEMPT IS TO BE MADE TO RETURN WHO TO WHAT DR. MAHLER PERCEIVES TO BE THE FIRST OF ITS FUNCTIONS -- THAT OF (QUOTING FROM THE CONSTITUTION) ACTING AS THE "COORDINATING AUTHORITY ON INTERNATIONAL HEALTH WORK." IN THE PAST, HE POINTS OUT (EB 59/6, PAGE 21), TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN PRECEDENCE OVER COORDINATION IN THE EVOLUTION OF WHO'S PROGRAMS. THE PRIME ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION, AS HE SEES IT, IS THAT OF COORDINATION. IF THE PRIMACY OF THIS FUNCTION WERE GENERALLY RECOGNIZED AND ACCEPTED IT COULD -- ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT LIKELY UNDER PREVAILING CIRCUMSTANCES -- RESULT IN REDUCED LDC PRESSURE FOR CONSTANTLY INCREASED REGULAR BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. THE ASSUMPTION HERE IS THAT, AS A COORDINATOR, WHO WOULD BE INFLUENTIAL IN MOBILIZING ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL RESOURCE FLOWS FOR HEALTH IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

10. WHILE RESOLUTION WHA 29.48 CALLS FOR EXPENDING 60 PERCENT OF WHO RESOURCES IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION PRESUMABLY AWAY FROM HEADQUARTERS, THE EXPECTATION THAT A REAL CHANGE WILL OCCUR WITH RESPECT TO DISTRIBUTION OF TANGIBLE MEDICAL RESOURCES, HOWEVER, IS PROBABLY ILLUSORY. WHAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD APPEAR TO ACCOMPLISH INSTEAD IS A REDISTRIBUTION OF THE BALANCE OF PERSONNEL AS BETWEEN

GENEVA AND REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS,
PRESUMABLY ACCOMPANIED TO SOME EXTENT BY A TRANSFER OF
CONTROL OVER THOSE PERSONNEL FROM HEADQUARTERS TO THE
REGIONAL DIRECTORS.

11. WE SEE A DISTURBING TREND IN THIS WHICH WE FEEL
DESERVES THE CLOSEST ATTENTION IN WASHINGTON. AS
RESOURCES ARE MOVED INCREASINGLY TO THE REGIONS, AND DECISION-
MAKING OVER THEIR EXPENDITURE BECOMES CONSOLIDATED INCREASINGLY
IN THE HANDS OF THE GROUPS OF STATES IN EACH REGION,
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 GENEVA 02769 02 OF 02 141934Z

WHO MAY RISK BECOMING MORE OF A TAXING INSTRUMENT THAN
A GLOBAL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION. THIS, COUPLED
WITH THE FACT THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE EXTERNAL
EVALUATION OF WHO EXPENDITURES (AS IS ACKNOWLEDGED IN
EB 59/6, PAGE 16) COULD MEAN THAT WE ARE MOVING INCREASINGLY
TOWARD UNIVERSALLY FUNDED BUT REGIONALLY MANAGED ACTIVITIES
WHOSE EFFECTIVENESS WE CANNOT CALCULATE. AS ANNEX
IV OF OFFICIAL RECORDS 238 REVEALS, THE EXPENDITURE
OF THESE RESOURCES IS DEVOTED OVERWHELMINGLY TO HEAD-
QUARTERS OPERATIONS, WHETHER IN GENEVA OR IN REGIONAL
SEATS.

12. INDEED, IN THE MISSION'S VIEW, WE PROBABLY NOW NEED
TO SEEK A MORE ILLUMINATING DEFINITION OF JUST WHAT
IS MEANT BY "TECHNICAL COOPERATION" IN WHO. APPENDIX 2
OF ANNEX III IN THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS "A RESOLUTION
FROM THE 26TH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
AFRICA "WHICH SPEAKS OF "TECHNICAL COLLABORATION"
AMONG REGIONAL STATES. IT MAY BE THIS WHICH WE ARE
FUNDING. THIS MAY BE A DESIRABLE OBJECTIVE WORTHY OF
OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT, BUT WE SHOULD EXAMINE THE ISSUE
CLOSELY TO SEE WHETHER THIS IS INDEED THE CASE.

13. THE POINT WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE IS NOT THAT WHO
PROGRAMS ARE ILL-CONCEIVED OR MISGUIDED, BUT RATHER THAT
THEY MAY HAVE BEEN PERCEIVED TO BE SOMETHING OTHER
THAN WHAT THEY ACTUALLY ARE. AS WE READ IT, THE
DIRECTION WE ARE GOING MAY NOT REPRESENT A MOVEMENT
FROM DECREASED HEADQUARTERS COSTS TOWARD GREATER
FIELD EXPENDITURES ON DIRECT HEALTH ASSISTANCE, SO MUCH
AS PERHAPS A SHIFT IN THE BALANCE OF PERSONNEL SLOTS
AWAY FROM GENEVA TO REGIONAL OFFICE.

14. THIS PROCESS MAY BE EXPECTED TO CULMINATE, IN A
SITUATION IN WHICH THOSE "TAXED" TO PAY FOR "TECHNICAL
COOPERATION PROGRAMS" WILL HAVE PROGRESSIVELY LESS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 GENEVA 02769 02 OF 02 141934Z

SAY IN THE DECISIONS REGARDING THE EXPENDITURES; THESE
WILL BE MADE BY RECIPIENT COUNTRIES IN EACH REGION
AND WILL PROBABLY NOT BE MUCH AFFECTED BY VIEWS OF
COUNTRIES PROVIDEING FUNDING. WE BELIEVE THERE IS A
BROAD POLICY QUESTION AT STAKE HERE, AND A NEED FOR
A COHERENT USG APPROACH TO IT.SORENSEN

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